

M1820
Sunday, April 12, 1970
Barn
Lunch/Coffee
Group II

Sunday Lunch

Mr. Nyland: So finish your coffee quite leisurely. It makes it very convenient now, that even after I talk a little that all you have to do is to stay and pretty soon there will be a little music. You can still have coffee. You can still lean back if you can—I don't know; you have no chairs—but make yourself as comfortable as you can. Just see if you can enjoy yourself.

For that, of course it is necessary to get rid of certain thoughts, and maybe the thoughts that prevent you from enjoying yourself; they may be worthwhile, but if you have a chance to push them in the background and just let your mind be blank. And just sit and, as I say, 'relax.' You cannot smoke, I'm sorry. But you can drink coffee. You can still eat a little bit of your food if you feel like it. You know, you can look at each other benevolently. You can get into a marvelous state, and not necessarily deep sleep or stupor, but just a low state of existence.

I think relaxation like that during the day is sometimes very useful. We used to have phrase with Orage: "to be good to the body." Just give the body satisfaction. Do what it demands within reason,

and simply let it be king for two or three hours; the same way as we put a young fellow in the chair of Mayor ... Mayor Lindsey and governs the city of New York for a day.

If you are on good terms with your body, because of that you can demand something of it a little later. Because there is someone of course who has to remain in charge; even the allowance of your body to be relaxed, also that has to be ordained; because you have to take it out of the realm of unconscious behavior and just let things go the way they happen to come, because that naturally would affect you. What you have to do of course is to have something in you that remains quite definitely Aware and also knows that you allow the body to take for a little while, to do exactly what it wants to do under your benevolent appraisal—‘appraisal,’ because after a little while you say, “It’s enough.”

A person has to learn to say, “It’s enough.” Indulging is very good for a little while. Like indulging in sleep is good for the body to recuperate. But when it’s enough, it’s enough. And then you get busy. It is not that you become intellectual about it or organize your life to the minute and say, “Now after five o’clock I will do this and I won’t do anything else and only quarter past five,” and so forth. Also that is a very good exercise, but in general what we are now talking about: Give your body a chance, and then when the body has enough intelligence it will admit that it has profited.

It may be itself, as a body, a little apprehensive about what’s going to happen next. But for the time being, it’s all right. When one has a birthday, for the time being it’s all right; that is, one sits and

there is a year gone by, only measured by what we call a 'year,' and then you become a little apprehensive about the next year because that is ahead of you. You know it's coming. To some extent you expect it to come. There may be hope that it is going to be the kind of year that you would like, or that in that year you feel you can grow.

The realization of a birthday is when you look at the past and being thankful for what you have received, what has brought you to this birthday. I've said it before: to telescope the past into one which is represented by the birthday, but then to use the telescope to look ahead and to hope—to expect—reasonably. On a birthday you make plans. When you let your body relax, you make plans. Your body doesn't really know that. It only enjoys it. It's like a cat purring. And the cat doesn't think about you picking it up and putting it out of doors after five minutes. But for five minutes they purr. They enjoy it to the fullest extent. If you can empty your brain a little bit with the thoughts of what you should do and simply accept what you are at that moment, it will help. The brain doesn't have to think then any further.

Your ordinary mind will start to think about what to do with your body after a little while. On a birthday you will think about what to do with the next year. And of course you must base it on what you know already of yourself and what can you reasonably expect. It is sometimes difficult to know what you can expect, even. You can hope for certain things. How pure is such a hope? It is reasonable enough?

Go into a new year very slow; gingerly; not at the same pace as the day before. After a birthday you take it easy. You want to

accumulate your energies. You want to find out how much there is at that time. Your energies are going to be divided the next day into three different categories, and each one should have its proper function and proper attention.

You consider the next day your health. You consider what is the state of your body. What is there that perhaps you have neglected. What, perhaps, you would like your body to be able to do and does not do it as yet. You have to look at this and accept it. Not that it is so difficult to accept it—that in itself is all right—but it is difficult to keep your thoughts out because they will start to say that the body ought to this and ought to that. The difficulty is just to be free and let your body be what it is but you recognize what it is and what it will be able to do in the next year.

Your future you think about with your intellect. You take your thoughts together. You see where the energy usually goes, in what direction in your intellect; the kind of thoughts you have and the kind of thoughts you allow, the thoughts you feel are productive and those that are thoughts which you already know thousand times to which still some attention is paid and they take up time and energy and space in your head.

The intellect has to go through a cleansing process. It has to become purged. You see, you don't do that with your body. You accept your body for what it is. You don't accept your mind. You know it is there, but you know damn well that the mind is not functioning the way it ought to. And about your mind you become critical; not your body—it is full grown; it has reached the acme of its

own existence, all it has to do is to die—but with your intellect you have great expectations. Your intellect is virgin soil. Your intellect is just a little ‘Do’ telling you it exists and exercising a little bit in ordinary little bits of thoughts, sometimes nice and clever but nevertheless quite undeveloped.

There is a tremendous future for one’s intellect. And that one considers the day after a birthday: How can I make my intellect grow up; how can I have in my intellect in the first place a commanding officer—a person who I would like to place at the head of the table so that then from there on one can see what is going to be consumed. I have to have a measure for that, and I really don’t have it. It is touch-and-go with an intellect. I do not know as yet what kind of thoughts are right or not—what should I allow; what kind of associations are necessary for the support of an intellect—because I am dependent on the past in my intellect. That is one of the functions of a human being: to remember his past. Because on that basis he can construct certain things which will be an extension of the past instead of having to repeat himself.

So this is one thing: first the master in the mind. The second is the rule of not repeating. The third is to take words apart and to see how they are used; and if you want to give your intellect a little exercise to change your sentences from clichés into Conscious statements. The fourth is the use of your voice in pronouncing things from your intellect; to become flexible in your thought; to have imagination. Hope perhaps is in your heart but the imagination is a definite intellectual quality when you want to try to describe what you

would like to become.

How will this year be? And it has to be under the command of what I call the 'master.' The master is not Impartial. The master is there just to clean up a little mess. And to allow yourself to do certain things slowly upon command of your intellect, that is the task for that kind of a center.

The greatest part of the day should be devoted to your emotional center; because not only that that is very delicate and it is, of course, not subject to any definition, it is definitely something that remains in an ethereal realm, and for that you have to be quiet when you want to consider it. But you try to see what are feelings for you; a feeling when you are engaged; a feeling not of your mind—that is, not a word expressed as a feeling—but a feeling which actually is a result of an experience. There are very few feelings that you really know. Much of it is just substitution or sometimes a little bit of repetition of what someone else has told you.

One has to find out more and more what kind of feelings one is capable of. And then, if it shows, then it is really very little. One has to start to teach the feeling to become more active, more open, much wider, more enveloping or expanding. And then as a result of such quantity being, you might say, 'pressed' within certain limitations of the solar sys ... of the solar plexus, that then the feeling has to deepen.

The deepening of your feeling is the road of the solar plexus to your heart. That is how one deepens a feeling. It is not easy to deepen it; because it is not subject to a command from your intellect;

your feeling does not respond to that. The demand has to come from an experience in which, then, there is a requirement that your feeling should deepen. For that, of course you need your head to help you a little bit to describe your experience; and of course here is where Work will come in—when you want to make sure that your experience is useful and is truthful one has to try to have something Aware and Awake regarding that; when an experience is felt in that way, when there is no more hallucination about it, when it has become for oneself a reality which you feel, and not necessarily describe.

The experience you will know does require at times much more of you 'giving.' I say it that way, because it is required at that time because of the experience of the concern you should have, particularly when it concerns other people but also when it concerns yourself. We talked about the question of being affected by the affairs of the world, and one has to learn a little bit more about oneself when the feelings don't seem to be there, or when they are just slightly touched. Who can look at a magazine, like Life, in which were published photographs of Americans killed in one week? And you go and you leaf through it page after page, and you see portraits of young fellows—all of them dead, without doubt. That's why they published it: in order to bring back, to your attention, your feeling, your concern with how life is and how it's carried out and how it's killed.

This is what I mean by 'feeling': that experience itself, in seeing such things, evokes something in you. When you wish a person a good year it evokes something in you of an emotional kind; your real

wish, not just peace on Earth and goodwill to all Men: just goodwill to a few and peace within your own heart.

How to deepen it? Simply it means, expose yourself to experiences and see what happens and see required ... what is required. Not to shy away from something that looks perhaps a little, let's call it 'dangerous.' It isn't so bad. You can go ahead. You don't have to make a production of things. Just simple. A little bit of this or that and see. You can control it. It's not running away from you as yet. Start out with animals. I've said it so often. Make depth in your emotion when you say things. Afterwards you can include some other people. Tell it to them when they're still alive. Don't wait 'til they die. The day is still filled with that kind of possibility. Take it and express it and learn how to say or how to be or whatever it is that you express as you're feeling an emotional state.

At the end of such a day, your emotions should reach the highest top of the tree around where you are. It should be an attempt to get away a little bit from this Earth. There should be an attempt of understanding your life in relation not only to the Earth but to something that is, of course, greater and that you feel you could become part of. And that the emotional state will end up in a religious prayer to God thanking Him for giving you a day as a birthday. And then wishing with all your heart—and with your mind under control, and with your body ready to work—to wish for a good future limited to one year; as if you make a contract and at the end of that year you would like to remove ... renew it, and maybe that for you God still will exist.

Both to Lynn and to Steve. I say our best wishes for them. [Softly to Lynn and Steve]: All right, you drink a little. You can drink to the future.

And now you realize how easy it is ... you can continue with your state—not necessarily slumber; a state of alertness; by this time I think you will be—and in that state of receptivity that maybe you can hear a little bit about—how will I call it—what I consider the ‘meaning of life.’

Okay, Bill.

Sunday Coffee

Mr. Nyland: So, it's the end of another weekend. I hope you got something out of it. Of course, first ... in the first place for yourself. In the second place for the Barn during the time that one Works here. And in the third place that what can be taken by the Barn and can be retained and will create an atmosphere for the Barn.

The most important thing is what you have received. Perhaps it is saying it mildly. The most important thing is: How have you been to receive anything; with what you come, with what you experience during the day, with what you gave, is there anything that has been filled? Did you take any cargo with you?

What will the week bring? What will many weeks bring? What will be your life because of being exposed to these kind of ‘strange’ phenomenon? Because that's the way I have to call it: unusual to say the least. The accent which has to be on the wish for oneself, how often was it there and how many times was the difficulty created, not

by conditions but by yourself? You take, as it were, not your 'whole' life but part of it—part of your recent life—and you bring that with your personality. And with that—your sense organs and your feelings and your thoughts—you take in things. They become experience for you. As the experience is within you, processes take place to extract from it certain things that you have taken in, and the result is a memory which, of course represents the thoughts of you with which you go out again into a new ... into a new week.

Will you have any help from what you have gotten? It's a question that I have to ask myself constantly. I think many times of Gurdjieff with his attempt at Fountainebleau; the first years—from 1921 on to '24 in particular, about which of course I do not know very much than only a little bit by hearsay—and afterwards seeing certain things that are still and were still there. Because after his accident the situation was changed, and the emphasis was placed on an entirely different kind of activity in which Fountainebleau still functioned, and of course there were many people around and for a long time it was still open. But in beginning years I can see Gurdjieff wishing to go up on an airplane and look over the grounds and see what is taking place as a bird's eye view; not to be all the time submerged in ordinary activities—contact with people or with thoughts that produced by certain experiences of them—but to look at their attitudes and their negativity from a little bit of a different viewpoint so as to be able to digest it.

Because it's not always easy to digest the negativity in total and to have immediately the right kind of an attitude; so that then one can take a negative attitude also and put it in the proper place and not let

it affect enthusiasm or desire to really do certain things for a good aim, being convinced that the aim is right. But every once in a while it's a little covered up and is not so easy to see it then in its proper light. It's not possible at such a time to pray; because God cannot really know all the difficulties we go through, and we are as a Group—taken together as a Group with all our individual idiosyncrasies and behaving—and each time one sees it and one is in contact with it and there is in you a certain desire to extract something from it, together with it you extract also other things almost without your knowledge and many times without your wish. And what are you going to do with that?

Because it is not that you live at the present time by Work alone. You live in your ordinary life and Work as a little sprinkling of salt to make it palatable. But is it really palatable? Because Work is sometimes extremely disturbing. It gets into your mind and it gets into your feeling; and it stays there for a little while and there is a desire to extricate it or to make it useful, and it's not always possible at that time to digest it. And then one continues with conflict within oneself, every once in a while thinking, "Why I am here? What is this Barn?" One tries to look at it sometimes from the outside as if one doesn't know, and the crea ... the impression created probably on the other people; and then every once in a while also one hears and then certain things start to become a little clearer that it is not always the way one looks at it oneself, but many times it's a question of the impression created on others, which may be much more impartial.

Because we are of course identified with Work; and then that

Work gives us disturbance, and then we don't know, really, what to do. Because all the different things that come in on one, they all seem to have a certain value. Sometimes the value is a little bit more, the more recent the experience is. It is difficult at that time even to become more Objective and to establish the real value, because everything seems then more important because it just happened or because you just happen to react to it. And to keep going; to keep an aim in mind; to look at the development of this Barn over a certain length of period and to try to make allowances because of its growing. One cannot expect a child to be a Man overnight; and at the same time, one is involved in it because you play a part, and you think every once in a while that perhaps you're on the wrong road or that you don't even know why you're here, that you start to question what it is that may have compelled you to come or even to stay. And then you feel that ... who has led you? And one starts to blame a little bit certain conditions or maybe some people, and you say, "What for, how do they know." Because simply you were not enough judge yourself; and you were led ... and you were led along with a current. You find yourself in that current. You cannot extricate yourself that easily—until you reach again certain moments which you might call 'good' so that then you can have perspective, and even at that time you are amazed that you have to go through all that kind of nonsensical suffering in order to reach something more important for you; because because about that one has to become quite convinced: if that isn't there, there is no use; if one cannot stand it and comes to that conclusion, there is no use.

You must not force yourself against the little flame which, because of such pressures, will go out. There is a pilot flame in each person, and one has in a realization that that is important: A wish to create conditions so that it could actually start to give you heat, and that afterwards it may even give you light. But the chances are also that the flame goes out. Sometimes one little ... one little wind that comes in, like when a door is opened and it comes in without you wishing it; and the flame happens to be in the way and there is no other way out than to go out, and then it dies, and it may sometimes be difficult to relight it. And it is usually that that kind of fear—that one misses something not knowing what one really misses—but that there is then within oneself a desire of ... I want to hold on because I don't know what I will do without it.

All these kind of motivations, or whatever happenings take place, have to take place. This is a law which happens to be on Earth. We have to understand it—that that what is taking place is a natural result of being here. All of us are different. We bring to this kind of Work our attitude as it is now. We all have, at times at least, a certain wish: surely wish to grow, to understand, to see what can be done by means of these ideas of Gurdjieff. At times one even believes, by looking at his photograph, that there is something on his face as an expression that he wishes you also to understand what he meant. And at the same time when he looks, a little sadness is there. And he doesn't want to say it, but what he really means is be very careful because you don't know what every once in a while you might get into. And then when you turn away you hear him say, "I hope you will

be able to continue.”

This is the attitude one can have towards a man like Gurdjieff. Because it was either “Yes,” or “No.” There was no mistake about that. Either one loved him or ... I wouldn’t say you hated him, but he had no meaning. And there are hundreds of people who came and looked and left. How many there are where certain seeds have been planted and where it still is germinating and is still alive—I do not know that. Maybe Gurdjieff in his airplane could judge about that. But I’m still here so I won’t know. I can only go by what I remember in my own life. I remember the ups and downs, the difficulties in the way. The persistence sometimes, sometimes the absolute illogicality of continuing, ready to throw Work overboard because I had a mind, I had a feeling. It’s not that I thought I meant I amounted to something, but I was not going to be crushed because I had, for myself, sufficient—that is, that I will be able to get along in this world without Work.

Such moments of course do come; and one faces them, and then one asks, “Is that really all there is to it?” Is it a question of getting along in this world? You see, the world as we see it is rather small. The world of our spiritual life is practically un ... invisible; of course invisible with eyes—almost one is not aware of it, with eyes which do not as yet exist—and still one admits it that something does exist of a different kind, and one then hopes and wants to believe that that is really right.

And after some time one considers one’s sad and sorrowful state. There are things like that in the life of Gurdjieff that we do know

about. Someday I will read you a little passage from the Third Series in which that is expressed. His despair, taken in the midst of his life when he was still in Asia Minor when he went through different experiences regarding the trips or the kind of activities he was then engaged in, seekers after truth. And this passage is very moving if one can understand the state in which a Man is at certain times. When it seems as if money ... many things have no further place in oneself. And that it is like a fata organa in which one has walked and walked and walked hoping for an oasis; and one has seen it, and not wanting to believe in an imagination, one has said that is not a hallucination for me because I know there is truth in it. Only sometimes the truth is so small but still one goes on until at a certain moment everything drops out the bottom and then where is one left ... completely emptied? And I remember a statement like that: "No, it cannot be."

I hope you will not have too many of such moments. It is possible you might. I think it is right that you doubt the validity of Work on yourself. I think it is right that you suffer so that then you could come to a conclusion and perhaps can make up your mind. And that maybe even if you do not make up your mind, that something remains in your heart of an assurance of a certain kind: "Never mind what is today, but I know tomorrow I could Wake Up." The statement that one makes for oneself: "Never mind this Earth." The accent for Work is not on this Earth, it is not on this Barn, it is not on your personality; it is a statement that can save you when it is there, when it can be said with enough conviction so that the statement itself has become

experience of you and has become part of your real life, and that on that basis you say, “No, it cannot be because I do not wish it that way.”

I feel these things once in a while; because we start it—with these kind of ideas— to put into practice. We are infants. The Barn is in its infancy. It is growing. For me there is no doubt. It may be difficult sometimes for others to see it. But even if it is growing, you may sometimes not feel that you grow with it. Or that sometimes you do not wish to grow with it; so that even for yourself when Work is there which maybe you won't forget, that this Barn may not be an answer and that perhaps you would have to find some other way of application. About that I have no judgment at all; and I don't want to have that, because I don't want anyone to follow what I suggest simply for the sake that I have said it. Gurdjieff Gurdjieff never taught it that way. Gurdjieff always told you, “Stand on your own feet. Then see what is.” And I hope, by God, that you will understand what you are seeing. He will not tell, and neither will I, what you should do. That is your freedom: to be here, to come, to take, to eat, then to live, then to wish to come back again to take in cargo for the following week, and to continue and continue.

All right.

End of Tape